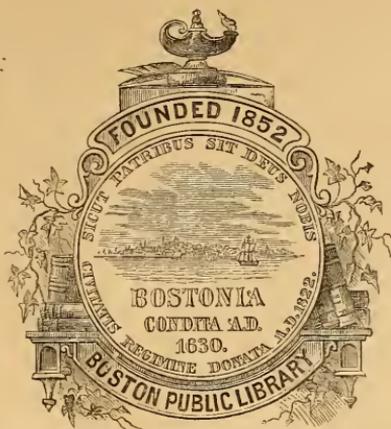




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THE
CELEBRATION

AT

NORTH COVENTRY,

MARCH 10, 1859,

OF THE SETTLEMENT OF

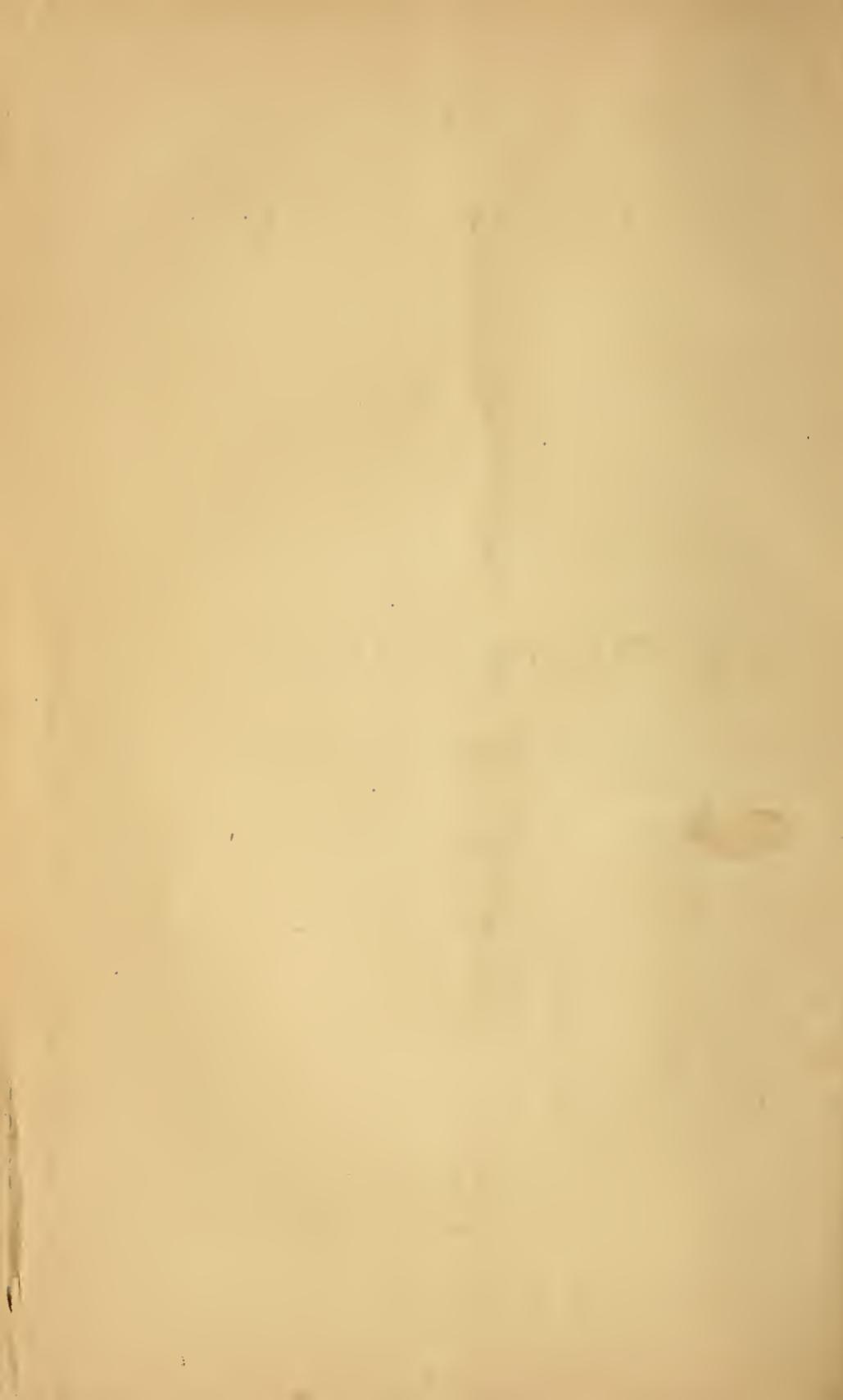
REV. GEORGE A. CALHOUN, D. D.,

OVER THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN THAT PLACE,

MARCH 10, 1819.

PUBLISHED BY ORDER OF THE SOCIETY.

HARTFORD:
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1859.



THE Second Congregational Church and Society of Coventry, having determined to celebrate in an appropriate manner, the fortieth anniversary of the settlement of their pastor, Rev. George A. Calhoun, D. D., a large congregation, composed of residents of Coventry and neighboring towns, among whom were twenty clergymen, assembled for that purpose at the house of worship of said Society, on Thursday, the 10th day of March, 1859, at 10 o'clock, A. M., where were held the following

EXERCISES:

1. Invocation and Reading of the Scriptures, by Rev. L. Hyde, of Bolton.
2. Singing—Introductory Piece. (This and the two following pieces were sung at Dr. Calhoun's ordination, March 10, 1819.)
3. Prayer by Rev. A. S. Atwood, of Mansfield.
4. Singing—148th Psalm, to the tune of Newburg.
5. The following Sermon, by Dr. Calhoun:

Forty years Pastor of the same Flock.

DEUT. 8: 2. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no."

After forty years of official labor, and near the closing scenes of his life, Moses thus addressed the children of Israel. In this address he brings distinctly to view God's providence, and the purpose of God in the dispensations of his providence. In all their wanderings in the wilderness the Israelites were led by the Lord their God. They were indulged and perplexed, involved in dangers, and wonderfully delivered; at times they were severely punished, and at other periods mercifully pardoned. All these were allotments of God's providence.

And the purpose to be accomplished by this leading of the Lord their God was to humble them, to prove them, to let them know what was in their hearts, whether they would keep God's commandments or no. The result of the trial proved them to be distrustful, ungrateful and rebellious. It brought out to their view, and to the contemplation of others, their propensity to sin.

Had the Israelites been taken, in modern conveyances, from Egypt to Canaan without calamity or hindrance,—had they experienced, on their journey, nothing to try their faith in God, and their spirit of obedience, they would have remained greatly deceived respecting their wickedness of heart, and would have been unprepared for entering the promised land. Character is never reformed till its defects are seen and felt. And the purpose of God in his providential dealings with men, is to develop their character, that the way may be prepared for the application of the remedy which he has provided. Depraved as we are, and deceived as we are in reference to the latent sinfulness of our nature trials are needful for bringing out to view what is in us, and causing us to feel our need of pardoning mercy and purifying grace. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." When the Israelites requested Moses to receive and communicate to them the commandments of the Lord, promising him they would hear and do; they did not imagine that before his return from the mount, they would cry to a molten calf, "These be thy gods, O Israel." But the trial to which they were subjected disclosed their idolatrous dispositions. When the prophet informed Hazael what cruelty he would inflict on the children of Israel, Hazael exclaimed: "What! is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" That very thing he was left to do. When Christ informed his disciples that the shepherd should be smitten, and the sheep be scattered, they all promised fidelity, and impulsive Peter said, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise said all the disciples." The result disclosed their self-confidence and self-deception, and was the means of humbling them before God.

In his last address to the Israelites, Moses exhorted them to remember God's providential dealings with their nation during the forty years then preceding. The trial of faith endured in the wilderness, the merciful deliverances experienced, the rebukes administered, the follies and rebellions practiced, and the fearful judgments executed, all should be kept in fresh remembrance as instructive and profitable to them and future generations.

The history of God's providential dealings with men, in connection

with the developments of human character under the divine administration, is next to the inspired volume the most instructive and practical book. Even the sacred Scriptures, as a special revelation from heaven, would have been incomplete without their historic pages. And as it was enjoined on the children of Israel, not only to keep in mind their history for forty years preceding, but to teach it to their children, so we conceive it to be enjoined on us to remember and communicate to our children, "all the way which the Lord our God has led us these forty years, to humble us, to prove us, that we might know what was in our hearts, whether we would keep his commandments or no."

While God's dealings with us as individuals, and as a religious community, is to us of special interest, our memorial will not embrace facts of thrilling interest to others. Ours is a small, obscure parish, with no peculiar local advantages. Nor has any event transpired here to render the place famous. Our history for forty years past, and even from its commencement, one hundred and fourteen years, is similar to that of other churches in this vicinity, except the pastoral relation has been more permanent than in most other places. The first pastorate was of fifty years, and the present has to-day arrived at its fortieth anniversary. And in gratitude to God, pastor and people unite in here erecting their Ebenezer and saying, "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." In the performance of this duty we are cheered by the presence of friends from abroad, who have come to mingle with us on this joyful occasion. May their future history be signalized with blessings from the source of all good.

"And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years."

The commencement of these years first demand our attention.

On the 10th of March, 1819, there were residing in this parish a population of 840; 407 males and 433 females. Of this number 142 belonged to this church; 72 were legally associated with the Baptist denomination, 9 with the Methodist, and one with the Episcopal. Of the number who were not professors of religion, 388 had been dedicated to God in the rite of baptism. There were in the parish 37 persons over seventy years of age, and 234 between the ages of four and sixteen.

Rev. Mr. Woodruff, my predecessor, was dismissed October 21, 1817, and I commenced preaching here on the first Sabbath of November, 1818. The beginning of my ministry was as a home missionary, and my purpose was to continue in that department of service. After

occupying one year in preaching to new settlers in Western New York, I came here to supply the pulpit for a season, recruit my health, and augment my small stock of sermons, that I might be better qualified for service in the missionary field. And truly, leaving Western New York in the freshness of its youth, I was not favorably impressed by the external aspect of this region of country. The buildings, orchards, fences, all appeared as if they had belonged to former generations, and that their present possessors had made but little improvement on what they had inherited.

Notwithstanding external appearances, I found here a united, intelligent, efficient church and society. From the close of the last pastorate they had kept the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. For six Sabbaths previous to my arrival their pulpit had been unoccupied; yet, as I was informed, there was a full attendance at the meeting-house on each Sabbath.

The house of worship then occupied was nearly a square building, without a bell, spire, or tower; distinguished from almost all other buildings in the parish by being painted white. It was kept in good repair. The pulpit was on one side of the house, elevated almost to a level with the floor of the second story, with a sounding board overhead. The gallery was on three sides of the house, the front seat of which extending on the three sides, was occupied with singers. The lower part of the house, and the rear of the gallery were divided into square pews, with one-third of the occupants only facing the pulpit. The house was furnished with neither stoves, carpets, or to any considerable extent with cushions. In the rear of the meeting-house, there was, as at present, a row of sheds for the protection of horses only—not for horses and carriages; for carriages were not then used but by two or three families. On the saddle and the pillion people came here to worship God.

On my first Sabbath, in public worship, I was favored with the presence of the venerable Dr. Williams, of Tolland, who had been invited to administer the Lord's Supper on that day. He was a gentleman of the old school, and by his affability and courtesey, he at once won my respect and esteem. At the close of the communion service, I observed one of the deacons present Dr. Williams with a bottle of wine; and I afterward learned that it was customary to make a like present to one who had officiated at the Lord's table.

My first day's service in the pulpit did not impress the congregation any more favorably in reference to me, than I was impressed in regard to this region of country. One man, more frank than some others,

when asked, "Who was the preacher?" replied, "I do not care who he is, if he is not the Mr. Calhoun that we have been expecting."

My introduction to the pastors of this county was at Rev. Mr. Booth's, in South Coventry. They had met there for the purpose of organizing what is denominated "The Minister's Meeting of Tolland County;" an organization which has been of great benefit to the ministers and churches, and which has never been more useful than at the present time.

After having labored here six or eight weeks, I found the people were cautiously inquiring one with another, whether probably they could do any better than attempt to detain me here to be their pastor. I had become attached to the people, but I did not wish to relinquish my long cherished object of being a home missionary in the new settlements of our country. I did not encourage the movement. But while the subject was in agitation, some prudent men would first like to know whether, in settling me, they would be in danger of settling on themselves a debt incurred for my education. The worthy father with whom I boarded, having been requested, sounded me in regard to my temporal circumstances. In reply to his inquiries, I said, "Tell your people I owe not a dollar; I have a horse, saddle, bridle, post-bags, spurs, and money enough to bear my expenses away from Coventry."

On the 8th of January, 1819, the church invited me to become their Pastor; and soon after the society united with the church in that invitation, with the offer of \$525 annually, for my support. The call was not unanimous, as all calls are at the present time, if we are to credit the newspapers. Three worthy men, and men of influence, voted against me, who however proved to be among my most cheerful supporters, and best friends till they died. Some of the society were dissatisfied, among them our venerable Father Brewster, who survives his generation, that a larger salary was not offered. I was urged to supply the pulpit by exchange, and withhold my answer to the call for a season. I did so, and after a few weeks I was presented with a paper, on which were subscriptions, payable in six months, amounting to \$450. On this paper were the names of so many men and women of different ages and circumstances, that I had not a doubt remaining, that if I had been moved by the Holy Ghost to the ministry of the Gospel, I had, by the providence of God, been called to minister to this flock. And at that moment of conviction there was kindled in my breast an indescribable interest in the people of my contemplated charge, which has continued in connection with them, their children,

and children's children, till more than forty years have passed away, and which I desire may not cease until I lay my head on the pillow of death.

On the reception of my affirmative answer to the call I had received, the Church set apart the fifth day of March as a day of humiliation, fasting and prayer; and the Church and Society, in union with myself, selected the tenth of March as the day of ordination, and the following Churches to constitute the Council for the occasion: viz., those in Tolland, Somers, Hebron, Ellington, South Coventry, Willington, Bolton, Vernon, and Andover. The ordination services were performed by the following Pastors: Introductory prayer by Mr. Nash of Tolland; sermon by Mr. Strong of Somers; consecrating prayer by Dr. Bassett of Hebron; right hand of fellowship by Mr. Booth of South Coventry; address to the people by Mr. Loomis of Willington, and the concluding prayer by Mr. Ely of Vernon. These services were all appropriate, and the consecrating prayer by Dr. Bassett—a man possessed of an eminently tender, heavenly spirit, and who humbly walked with God—was quite affecting to the congregation. Providence favored the occasion with a pleasant day, and for the first and last time that season, with sleighing. A great number from neighboring towns were present, and the congregation was probably larger than any one convened in this place since that day.

I have ever considered it a kind providence, that I was thus early, in my pastoral life, associated with Pastors like those then belonging to the Consociation of Tolland County. Nine of them are now in their graves; three others, if living, are without a charge, and far advanced in life; and one, after an absence from the county for many years, is now Pastor of the First Church in East Stafford. These Pastors had not enjoyed the privilege of so thorough a theological training as the ministers of the present day. Only three of them were graduates of a theological seminary. Nor were they then favored with advantages for biblical and theological attainments, and for general information respecting the church and the world, which are now allotted the ministry. The periodical literature of the present time, which is now inundating the community, and especially that of a religious character, forty years ago had scarcely commenced its flowing forth. Now, information respecting the civil and moral condition of the human family, and the struggling and progressive movements of the Church in her advancement to the period of millennial glory, is brought to us weekly in mammoth sheets. All the benevolent enterprises of the Church, which are now accomplishing so much for the good of man,

which are promising so much for the future, and which are sending us monthly details of their labors, conflicts, and victories, were, if in existence, in their incipient state, forty years since. Biblical literature and theological science are now receiving far greater attention than at the commencement of the period under review. Then there were in operation but two theological seminaries in the country, and but six men—three at Andover, and three at Princeton—exclusively devoted to biblical or theological teaching. But now, how many! The amount of sanctified talent, research and learning concentrated in and diffused through the pages of the Princeton Review, the New-Englander, the Biblical Repository, and the American Review, is very great;—an honor to the ministry, to the church, and to the country.

My first associates in the sacred office were not favored with such valuable means for expanding their knowledge of the moral condition of the human family, of learned attacks on the inspiration of the bible and evangelical religion, and of modern speculations in theology. Attention was not then so much directed to composition as at the present time. In the pulpits of Tolland County were heard but few rhetorical flourishes. I do not call to mind a minister in the county, from the revered Dr. Bassett, the father of us all, to the youngest of our fraternity, who could be justly called an elegant writer or an eloquent speaker.

But while the Pastors of that day possessed less general knowledge, less diffusive, and a less cultivated style of writing than what is now attained by their successors, their learning and efforts were more directly, pointedly, and efficiently applied to the salvation of lost men committed to their charge. Their minds were more occupied with the clearly revealed will of God, than with criticisms and speculations. Their style of address was simple and perspicuous—Anglo-Saxon, the best medium through which to convey the great truths of salvation to American minds. They were all Calvinists of the same type, and were steeped in the doctrines of the Bible as expounded by Edwards, Bellamy, Dwight, and others. Their doctrines they preached clearly and fearlessly, and the people, to no inconsiderable extent, understood them, and under their preaching there were such instances of pungent conviction of sin, such clear cases of conversion to God, and of so frequent occurrence, as would rejoice the hearts of ministers to witness at this time.

At the commencement of my ministry here, there were some requirements enforced by this and other churches, and some practices in connection with the worship of God in his house, which have passed

away. A person who was known to have committed a certain offense previous to his hopeful conversion, could not be received into the church till he had made a public confession of the offense alleged. This was the last relic of "the half-way covenant" scheme. On the birth of a child, the parents returned thanks to God in his house on the Sabbath for the favor. More frequently than now were public prayers requested for the sick, and public thanks returned on their recovery. The bereaved requested prayers, that the bereavement might be sanctified to them; and when their note of request was read, they answered to it by rising from their seats. Even those who were not in the habit of attending public worship, after death had afflicted them, would come to the sanctuary once, and ask the prayers of the church, that they might profit by their affliction. To neglect *this* would have been considered heathenish. When in my presence a minister preached for me, on rising to commence his sermon, in accordance with custom, I arose and stood by him till his text was named and discourse commenced. The pews in the lower part of the meeting house were "dignified," and from time to time a "seating committee" was appointed, and authorized to assign to each family their pew and pew-mates. And in performing the service allotted them, they were directed to associate in the pews, as near as possible, those of equal age, property, and respectability. Young married couples were assigned to the lowest pews, and as they increased in years and property, and gained in public respect, they were raised from one degree of "dignity" to another, till they arrived at "the old people's pew," from which they were removed to the grave. This practice of "seating the meeting-house" came in direct conflict with the unsanctified feelings of the human heart; and it was not an unfrequent occurrence, that some of the congregation were dissatisfied with their seats, or their seat-mates, and to such a degree as to manifest their displeasure in the house of God, and awaken animosities in the community.

Forty years ago there was but little property in this parish, or in the County of Tolland, compared with what is now possessed. This was apparent not only from the aspect of buildings, orchards, fences, the cultivation of farms, and the appearance of domestic animals, but from the furniture of dwellings, and the equipage then in use. There were then in this parish but four houses painted white, but four floors covered with a carpet, and less than half a score of four-wheeled vehicles. Even the expense of whitewash, as an application to the walls of houses, was incurred by few of the inhabitants. And these were not the only indications of poverty compared with the

present. There were few persons who had money at interest, or were the possessors of stocks, compared with the number who were in debt, and whose farms were mortgaged. Even our larger and smaller farmers were obliged to resort to banks to save their property from foreclosures or attachments, to what would now be considered a fearful extent.

And what was the reason of this depression in worldly circumstances? The people were industrious, and in all respects, but one, frugal. The expense of living was small, compared with that at the present time. *Their gains were consumed, and they were oppressed by the use of intoxicating drinks.* Think of the annual expense of manufacturing and storing in cellars fifteen hundred or two thousand barrels of cider, and then drawing it out and bringing it forth a quart at a time. Think of the expense of making, transporting to distilleries, and converting into cider brandy, an equal amount to be consumed here and elsewhere. Think of the expense of hogshead after hogshead of rum retailed to this little community during the seasons of haying and harvesting. Think of the expense of supplying various kinds of intoxicating drinks with which to express their respect and hospitality to friends who called to see them. Think of the expense of providing these drinks abundantly for all gatherings—civil, military, social, ecclesiastical, and clerical. Think of the expense incurred at stores and taverns for liquors dealt out in small measures. Examine the ledgers of our old merchants, and learn what proportion of their trade was in intoxicating drinks. Learn how much idleness, litigation and crime were then occasioned by their use.

Could any community secure a livelihood and gain wealth from a rugged soil under such a pressure? This community was then composed almost exclusively of small farmers, without investments or business abroad. If there were a few individuals who engaged in manufacturing, the enterprise to them was a failure. And is it a matter of surprise, that farms were mortgaged, and that what would be considered marks of poverty were seen over the place and the region? Is it a matter of surprise, that at least one man in every score became a drunkard, and that not a few women were addicted to habits of intemperance? Is it strange that the church had far more cases of discipline from the use of intoxicating liquors, than from all other sources?

I here present my solemn protest against the conclusion from what has been said, that this people were more addicted to the use of intoxicating drinks than other communities. They were, compared with

people of other towns, temperate, sober, and religious. And, as long as I live, I shall cherish them in respectful, affectionate, and grateful remembrance. They did not sin in the use of intoxicating drinks, as persons are now sinning, who in health use them as a beverage. They, in common with all other persons the country over, were strangely and dreadfully deluded. Forty years ago, there was probably not one in five hundred who did not believe that the use of intoxicating drinks, as a beverage, was absolutely needful, and that hence it was duty to make use of them. I remember Rev. Dr. Williams of Tolland, a conscientious, godly man, counseled me "to be sure to take a little spirit for restoring exhausted nature after leaving the pulpit." And to enforce his counsel, he added, "Brother Backus of Somers once attempted to get along without using spirits after preaching, but his health failed." I remember, too, that about the commencement of the temperance reformation, an annual meeting of the Tolland County Association was held at Dr. Howard's in South Coventry, and for our entertainment the Doctor had provided various kinds of spirituous liquors, and placed them on a table where we were assembled. The question was suggested, whether, in view of the fearful ravages of intemperance, it was not the duty of ministers to abstain from the use of ardent spirits on public occasions. It was contended that we should injure ourselves by abstinence, and diminish our influence in checking the progress of the destructive evil. But appalling facts were brought to view, which secured a vote to exclude from all our meetings the use of spirituous liquors. When that vote was taken, the Moderator, Dr. Bassett, called out, "Dr. Howard! Dr. Howard!" When the Doctor appeared at the door, the Moderator said to him, "Take these things hence!" They were taken away, and never since has the like been introduced into a clerical or ecclesiastical meeting when I was present. Since that time a flood of light has been cast on the subject of temperance, and no community were more prompt than this in *coming to the light that their deeds might be reprov'd*. And just in proportion as they were delivered from the oppression of intoxicating drinks, their worldly circumstances were improved, and their moral condition became more and more eligible. Within the last forty years, property in this parish and in this county has increased fourfold, if I do not misjudge. And the county in appearance and enterprise is forty years younger than it was in 1819.

The times of that ignorance God winked at; but now he commandeth all men everywhere, who use intoxicating drinks, to repent. If there is a person who is ignorant of the evil consequences of their

use as a beverage, it is his own fault. And, if in defiance of the displeasure of the Almighty, the entreaties, prayers, sighs and tears of the friends of temperance, and the facts spread out before them, there are those who will use or countenance the use of intoxicating liquors, even adulterated as they are, *the curse of heaven will overtake them; it will not tarry, it will make haste.* And if there are persons who have not enough of moral principle or constitutional resolution to secure obedience to the injunction, written in characters of blood, "Touch not, taste not, handle not" the intoxicating cup! oh, they are objects of pity! Their way to the grave is dreary, and their prospects for eternity are covered with the pall of death. If there are those who, for temporal gain to themselves, would bring back the delusion and oppression and desolations of former years, they must abide the weighty and fearful responsibility. "O my soul! come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united." And if the Church of Christ and the temperate part of the community shall silently witness the return of this enemy of God and man, with no efforts to stay his progress, and to urge forward and perfect the reformation so happily begun, they will act an inglorious part, they will incur the frowns of heaven.

In reference to things as they were forty years since, I shall only allude to the education of children. In many of our families, on the Sabbath, the Assembly's Shorter Catechism was taught the children and youth by their parents. And on each Saturday children in our common schools were taught the same compendium of divine truth. This exercise in our schools was continued till within a few years. October 4, 1818, one month before I came here, the church appointed a committee to organize and superintend a Sabbath School. That committee, however, did not perform the service assigned them. The summer following, Harlan Page gathered a small company of children into a pew in the gallery and gave them religious instruction. That was the beginning of a Sabbath School in North Coventry. The church has ever since had the Sabbath School under its supervision, appointing its officers, and defraying needful expenses. For some years it was thought impossible to sustain it in the winter; but that great mistake was corrected, and the school has been continued summer and winter, and now all the children and youth in the parish between four and twenty years of age, are connected with the Sabbath School, (except about thirty,) and some fifty adults are joined with them.

During the ten first years of my ministry, the population of the

parish decreased in number twenty-five; and there were received into the church one hundred and sixty-seven, only ten of whom were admitted on recommendations from other churches. Of the one hundred and sixty-seven members received into the church during the ten first years of my pastorate, eighty-eight have been dismissed on recommendations to other churches. The decade now under review was a time of signal mercy, of frequent and powerful revivals of religion. It embraced that part of the series of revivals commencing about the year 1800, which was most effective and blessed to the churches. The irregularities and evils of the "New Lights" of the last century, had awakened fears of fanaticism, and suspicions of all extraordinary religious excitements, which were not at once removed. They lingered in the breasts of many good people, and rendered many churches rather hopeless of good from this extraordinary religious movement. But God, who is wise in counsel, ordered the commencement of this special work of grace to be connected with the labors of Mills, Hallock, Porter, Griffin, Tyler, and other sound, able, discreet men, of deep piety, known and honored in the churches. The revivals under their ministry were so conducted as to quiet fears and remove suspicions. When the series had thus favorably commenced, God raised up, endowed, and sent into the field as a special laborer in revivals, a man wonderfully adapted to the exigencies of the times,—a man humble and retiring in his walk; simple, earnest and solemn in his address; sound and uncompromising in the faith; discreet in all his movements; and with a discernment of human character, the workings of the human heart under the operations of the Holy Spirit, and the evil consequences of fanaticism, which was scarcely equaled in his generation. He sought with an intensity of feeling, the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace in all the churches. He honored the pastoral office, though not himself a pastor, and labored to promote its permanence. Thousands now in heaven, and not a few lingering on the verge of life, look to him as their spiritual father. Fears and suspicions of revivals of religion all vanished away while God was signally blessing the labors of Dr. Nettleton. And scarcely a person, with the love of God in his heart, could be found who did not desire the continuance and the extension of the special work of grace. So it was till the ten years of which I am speaking had expired, and new measures were introduced into the churches to some extent, and new speculations were agitated among the ministers. Divisions were occasioned, the bond of peace disturbed, and the work of God declined.

Since 1831, there have been many precious revivals of religion, the

one the last year the most precious, and many souls saved from the wrath to come; but they have assumed a different aspect from what they were. Previous to 1831, the special influences of the Holy Spirit were manifested for a longer period than since that time.

Revivals which commenced here, one in 1819, and another in 1822, were each of a year's continuance. Divine influence, in its progress, permeated the body of the community, awakening in some a deep and distressing sense of guilt, and in others hostility to the cause of Christ. While preaching, I have not unfrequently observed countenances which indicated the working of hot displeasure within; and others which seemed to say, "*we are lost, there is no hope for us;*" and others still, who in appearance were saying with rapture, "we have found him of whom Moses in the law and in the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Convictions of sin were pungent and long continued, and when by the law sinners were brought to Christ, they had seen and felt the plague of their own hearts, and they could speak of their depravity, of the discriminating grace of God, and the preciousness of the Saviour. At one time a meeting was appointed at my house to examine candidates for admission into the church, and the people generally were so much interested to attend, that my house could not well accommodate all who came. The meeting was adjourned and held in the meeting-house the two following evenings. A large assembly were convened and heard, with breathless silence, converts relate what God had done for their souls. Their convictions of sin were such, the change in their views and feelings was so manifest, their humility and gratitude were so apparent, that many became convinced of their own lost state, and others said, "*truly this is the work of God.*"

The gradual decrease of our population, and the change of real estate from the possession of those connected with the ecclesiastical society, to those who were not disposed to be thus connected, diminished the number and means pledged for the support of the gospel. It was seen what would be the inevitable result of this gradual diminution of strength,—that this church and society, like others in the vicinity, would eventually be cast on the Home Missionary Society for aid, as an object of charity, or the parish become a waste place. To meet the exigency, a plan was devised to raise the amount of five thousand dollars, and invest it as a permanent fund, the income of which should be applied to the support of the ministry. At that time, 1827, it was a weighty concern to secure that amount from our population, as there was not, at the period of my ordination, one man in the

parish worth over eight thousand dollars, and but very few who were each worth half that amount. The plan was executed with this provision, that the interest on a subscription to the fund should be applied annually toward paying the ecclesiastical tax of the subscriber as long as he lived and remained in the place. In all respects it was a good investment. It at once checked the progress of decline in pecuniary strength, removed an obstacle in the way of some persons uniting with the society, calmed the fears of the friends of Zion arising from this source, and rendered the management of the society's temporalities far less difficult. And never were the institutions of religion sustained here more easily, quietly, or more to the satisfaction of all concerned than at the present time. Even subscribers to this fund, who lived and remained here a score of years, supporting the Gospel, made by their subscriptions an investment much to their pecuniary profit. "The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." The interest of their subscriptions was realized, and they shared in the benefits of other subscriptions, as subscribers, one after another, passed away. Our experience of the good accomplished by the fathers in establishing this fund, leads us, unitedly, to recommend a like provision in feeble societies, for the support of the Gospel. We have not yet learned a better way to secure all the necessary means for the support of our institution, than to annually tax the members of the society, and then rent the pews to whomsoever may wish to occupy them.

A census was again taken in 1839, which disclosed the fact that the population of the parish had decreased to seven hundred and forty-four: ninety-six less than in 1819.

The subject of emigration has awakened in us emotions of pain and pleasure. It is not pleasant to have our children taken from us, and scattered abroad; nor to part with tried friends, whose continued presence and aid might have been much to our comfort, and to the advantage of our community; but to have a draft on us for all the increase of our population, and ninety-six persons besides, within the period of twenty years, was a burden not easily borne by a small parish. It is no little care and expense to rear up children and educate them; and while we have had the care and expense, other places, to a considerable extent, have received the avails of their usefulness in mature life. Had all those, who were born here, spent their lives with us, the number of our inhabitants would have been doubled. Our farms would have been more highly cultivated, and far more productive; our busi-

ness transactions would have had more of an enterprising aspect, and our church would have embraced a much greater number.

But, while I do not believe that the mass of those who have emigrated from us have been in more comfortable worldly circumstances, or have enjoyed superior religious privileges than those who remained with us; I think they may have increased their usefulness by their removal. Not a few have entered fields for doing good more extended than they could have found here. And I should do injustice to the cause of my Master, were I to refer only to the ministers and Harlan Page, who have gone from us to do an extensive service for Christ elsewhere. A little band of emigrants left us, about twenty years ago, and, with some others, planted a church in Wethersfield, Illinois. At various times we afforded some aid to that church in its infancy. It has now become a strong church for that section of the country, surrounded by an intelligent and prosperous community. It has already sent out a colony to form a second church, with prospects of continued life and growth. It has been my privilege to preach to the congregation in Wethersfield, where were forty persons, who had been connected with the congregation worshipping in this house. Much of the good we have been instrumental in accomplishing has been through the agency of those whom we have educated and sent abroad.

In this review of the way which the Lord our God has led us these forty years, we find many errors in judgment and practice with which to censure ourselves, and for which to crave pardon at the throne of grace; but notwithstanding our many offenses, we have been kept a united people. Early in my ministry there were local prejudices to be met,—the inhabitants of one section of the parish were somewhat enraged against those of another section; and from time to time there have been manifestations of displeasure one toward another; but having obtained help of God, we have kept in some good degree the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. During one period of long continuance, we had frequent skirmishes, but no blood was shed,—no one was driven from our ranks. Few and far between have residents here dissolved their legal connection with this society. And at no period since its organization, did it present an aspect so inviting for accessions to the number of its members. To-day it owes not a dollar, while it possesses the sum of ten thousand dollars safely invested in a fund and other property; and in the management of its temporalities more harmony is seldom found in a religious community.

After my long residence here as a minister of Christ, I should do violence to my own feelings, did I not gratefully acknowledge that I

have been kindly treated by residents of other religious persuasions, and by those who were not connected with any sect of Christians. I have visited and prayed in their families, as if they belonged to my own flock, often administered the Gospel to them when afflicted; and among the regular attendants on our public worship, may be seen those who appear to be in spirit, one with us, though of denominations differing from us. We have ever been uncompromising as Calvinists and Congregationalists; but we have never quarreled with our neighbors. For about forty years, four times a year, with a few exceptions, I have visited all the schools in the parish, and so far as I know, no opposition from any quarter has been manifested.

I will now group together some of the changes which have occurred during my pastorate.

On the 10th of March, 1819, by being placed over this consociated church, I became particularly connected with thirteen pastors of this Consociation. Nine of these pastors are dead, and but one remaining with the charge of a church. The changes which have occurred since, have connected me with sixty-two pastors of the Consociation, and five pastors of the Rockville churches, which are not consociated. Since the day we are met to commemorate, there have been in our denomination, within the limits of this Consociation, including Rockville churches, fifty-four ordinations or installations. There are now connected with the Consociation twelve Pastors. Five Congregational churches have been organized in the county within the period of my ministry. In 1819 there were in the county twenty-two houses of public worship, embracing those belonging to all denominations; now there are forty-two.

In 1819 the population of the parish was 840; in 1829, 815; in 1839, 744; in 1849, a further decrease. Now in 1859 our population is 744, the same it was twenty years ago, having increased within a few years. We have now fourteen more families than in 1819, when the population embraced ninety-six souls more than are now found among us. Four hundred seventy-eight have died, dissolving every marriage relation of a previous commencement, except eleven. This is about the number of funerals at which I have officiated, including those in neighboring towns. Of the population of 1819, are now remaining one hundred and sixteen souls.

March 10, 1819, this church contained 142 members. Three hundred and ninety-one have been since added to its fellowship and watch; three hundred by profession, and ninety-one on recommendations from other churches. We have followed to their graves one hundred and

fifty of our church; have dismissed and recommended to other churches two hundred and twenty-five, one hundred and thirty-four more than we have received from abroad; seventeen have been excommunicated, and from three others has the watch of the church been withdrawn. We have now remaining one hundred and thirty members. Of our present number, sixteen were members of the church forty years ago—five males and eleven females. They linger here with us, expecting soon to join the church triumphant. Of the legal voters who belonged to the society when I was invited to become their pastor, eleven having obtained help of God are continued with us.

Members of the church and members of the society of 1819, with your companions! Beloved friends,—Since first we were united in the relation of pastor and people, time has wrought in and around us great changes. Then we were in the freshness of recent maturity, just entering on the great work of life, surrounded by a throng of loved and respected friends and associates. But forty years have flown,—forty years of labor, of joy and sorrow, and now, gray haired and feeble, we stand here to-day alone, in the midst of a new generation. We are scattered trees in the open field; the forest has disappeared around us, our boughs are broken, our trunks are dry and weakened, and a gentle breeze will cast us down. What remains to us of life we will, in gratitude to God, devote anew to his service, trusting in Him, that others will be led to perpetuate this church to future generations, and that we and those who have gone before, and those who shall come after us from this church, will unite in an undying song of praise for all the way we have been led in this world by an unseen hand.

The commencement of forty years is not like their close. Oh how few present will be found forty years hence to tell the story of this anniversary. But we shall all meet to hear the world's history; and for the meeting of the great day, God grant that we may be prepared.

[Before the assembly dissolved they requested a copy of the foregoing sermon for publication.]

6. Singing—Ordination Anthem.
7. Prayer by Rev. A. Marsh, of Tolland.
8. Singing—Doxology—"Praise God from whom," &c.
9. Benediction by Dr. Calhoun.

Upon the conclusion of the foregoing exercises the congregation repaired to the basement room of the church, where, after a blessing had been requested by Rev. Joseph Knight, of Stafford, they partook of a plentiful collation, which being finished, the following sentiments were read and responded to.

1. *Our Revered Pastor*—A faithful shepherd who for forty years hath fed his flock in the integrity of his heart, and guided it by the skillfulness of his hand. A sound theologian, a wise counsellor, and an earnest defender of the faith once delivered to the saints. He is known in the gates—he sitteth among the elders and is had in reputation with all them that are round about.

In response to this sentiment, the Rev. Prof. Vermilye, of East Windsor Seminary, spoke substantially as follows :

I consider it a privilege, Mr. CHAIRMAN, to be present on this occasion, and to take part in these exercises; and especially to be the organ for the expression of the sentiments of this congregation, towards your beloved pastor. Such a duty might perhaps have fallen into more appropriate hands; others whose course of life led them into a more intimate acquaintance with Dr. Calhoun, might have been looked to, had Providence permitted them to be present, to perform this grateful service. Had my venerable predecessor in office, (Dr. Tyler,) been spared to this day, I know well, sir, with what sentiments of respect, and warm, fraternal affection, he would have confirmed your language just uttered. And if my colleague, (Dr. Thompson,) were here, he would cordially affirm it, as he has authorized me to do in his name. Their intimate fellowship, for nearly a quarter of a century with your pastor, would have given increased value to their testimony to his worth. And yet, sir, I do not speak without knowledge, when I answer to your call. My acquaintance with Dr. Calhoun, gained first by traditions at the institution where he graduated, (Hamilton College, N. Y.) and improved by personal intercourse, has inspired me with a sincere friendship, and with a veneration for his character, and brought me fully into sympathy with this occasion. And though I speak in his presence, I shall speak plainly, sir. Indeed, I am inclined to think it is high time that some one should tell him distinctly what is thought and said of him round about. It will probably do him no harm.

This is the celebration, Mr. Chairman, of a forty years pastorate! Such an occurrence is not very common in these days of brief pastorates, it strikes us, forcibly. But I cannot help thinking that such a length of service is peculiarly worthy of the name of a *pastorate*. Dr. C. has been your *pastor*; and with peculiar affection and veneration, and even pride, you may speak of him by that name. What

scenes of pastoral care and of affecting interest does it recal! How it calls up associations of the tenderest and the most solemn character! He has been with this people, you and your fathers, for forty years; not only in the sacred desk, speaking to you "all the words of life," but in your families. He has been your friend and counsellor, sympathizing in your sorrows and joys, and seeking to turn them all to account for your spiritual good. What words of kindness, of comfort, of advice, of warning,—what scenes of affliction and of joy, does this occasion recall! What momentous results must have attended a pastorate and a ministry of forty years! I think you do well, Mr. Chairman, to mark this occasion, for your own sakes, as well as to honor your pastor. All of you, from the aged members of the church of 1819, who have traveled the whole journey of forty years with him, through all the ranks of the middle aged, and down to the children among you, should commemorate the day. And I am sure that you will authorize me here to testify, in the name of this whole people, that he has been a faithful, laborious, wise pastor, a good under-shepherd, who has "fed the flock" here committed to him "in the integrity of his heart, and guided it by the skillfulness of his hands"! You are permitted this day, after forty years, still to say, *our pastor*; and it is your privilege here in his presence, to give public and solemn testimony to his fidelity and usefulness in that office.

You speak of Dr. Calhoun, sir, as your *revered* pastor, and with reason. I think you have good cause to *revere* your pastor. When a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ has for so long a time sustained that most honorable office, not only without reproach or blame, but with increasing esteem and usefulness, when he has exhibited those personal virtues which adorn the Christian character, in his conspicuous station, and has united to these an official dignity which brings public honor, he has a claim upon our reverence. The pastorate and public ministry of Dr. C. here have not been merely formal and official. His work has been sealed with the approbation of the Master. He has had souls given him. Conversions and revivals have gladdened his heart. I do not doubt that his mind now reverts to some of those scenes, as filled with the most solemn and precious recollections. He will recall many whom he has been privileged to comfort and strengthen in the dying hour; many whom he has been permitted to guide to the Saviour, answering their earnest inquiries in regard to the way of life. These are the highest and richest blessings a minister can enjoy; this is the privilege most to be coveted, to be permitted to say at the close of his ministry, "here am I, and those whom thou hast given me, in Christ!"

Yet your pastor has been useful in other spheres also. I allude particularly to his relations to the cause of education, especially of ministerial education; and it is the birth-right and prerogative of New England ministers to concern themselves with these matters. You speak, sir, of your pastor, as a "sound theologian, and an earnest defender of the faith once delivered to the saints." And you will permit me to speak of this point, not only in your name, but also in behalf of the Seminary with which I am connected. Dr. Calhoun was among the founders of that institution, and has been among its faithful, devoted, and most serviceable friends. It owes to him in no small degree, I believe, its permanent establishment; and we will not forget, along with his services, the fact that his church consented at times to relinquish his labors for one year and an half, that he might promote its interests. While we thank him, we thank this people likewise for these sacrifices. And as my respected colleague has intimated in his letter, Dr. C.'s visits to the seminary, from time to time, were not only an encouragement to its officers, but an advantage to its pupils. They looked up to him with reverence; if they wished a model of a wise, judicious, devoted minister, their professor would be very apt to point them to the pastor of North Coventry. I think his example has done good in this sphere. And he was able to defend that faith which he loved, when controversy was a duty; as I suppose those knew who drew him out to the performance of that duty.

Mr. Chairman, the results of this forty years pastorate, have been sketched to-day, in the history and present condition of your church and society. And in view of the facts presented, I desire to repeat the remark of a brother just made to me: *it is not in vain to preach the gospel in any community.* Your minister, sir, has preached the gospel; he has been Christ's minister to you; that has been his work. And it is not in vain for any community to establish and sustain the institutions of religion. Recall what good has been done here; how all your interests, material, intellectual, moral, social, religious, have been promoted and advanced. And will any one say, that any other instrumentality is to be mentioned by the side of this,—the institutions of the gospel,—to be compared with it for a moment? But I am to speak more particularly of your pastor. You well say, "he is known in the gates, he sitteth among the elders, and is had in reputation with all them that are round about." That is a true testimony; such are the fruits of a steady, faithful adherence to the course of duty. Here is your pastor, sir, thus honored. So you honor him now; so you will honor him, I am sure, while he is continued here. And when he is

transferred to the better and perfect reward, which the Master gives to those who faithfully, though imperfectly serve Him and their generation here,—may that hour yet be distant,—you will still honor and reverence his name! Other hands will break to you the bread of life; another voice will preach to you the everlasting gospel, warn you, comfort you; another will be your pastor; but you and your children will not suffer his name and services here to be forgotten!

Mr. Chairman, in your name, in the name of his people, in the name of his brethren in the ministry, and of this whole congregation, I offer to your pastor the testimony of our sincere esteem, love and veneration!

Music—"Our Pastor."—By a select quartette.

Before he sat down, Dr. Vermilye read the following letter from Rev. Prof. Thompson, of East Windsor Seminary.

EAST WINDSOR HILL, March 9, 1859.

To Messrs. R. B. Chamberlain, L. Talcott, and others, Committee of the Church in North Coventry:

DEAR SIRS,—I have come reluctantly to the conclusion that it will not be practicable for me to be present at the celebration in your place to-morrow.

Be assured, gentlemen, that your considerate kindness in providing a place for me at your festival, will not soon be forgotten.

You are aware that for the last twenty-five years an intimate relation has subsisted between the revered pastor of North Coventry and the Theological Institute in this place. Since the corner stone was laid to this time, his cordial, unwavering devotion to the seminary has been abundantly testified.

Were I to open my lips at the joyful solemnity to-morrow, they would offer in behalf of the living and the dead, a sincere tribute of acknowledgment, both to Dr. Calhoun and the people of his charge. How much this sacred institute is indebted to his counsels and toils, few can understand. Nor is it easy to estimate the generosity and public spirit of his church and congregation, in relinquishing his services from time to time, in aid of our enterprise.

Of the two hundred and thirty-six young men who have joined this seminary, a large proportion have been, more or less, dependent on charitable aid. To Dr. Calhoun, directly or indirectly, we are, under God, more than to any one else, indebted for the assistance which has

enabled them to gain the ministry. Nor is this all. Unconsciously to himself, your pastor has done much to mould the character of our young brethren. They have acquainted themselves with their benefactor's spirit and manner of life. His visits to the institute brought him into close connection with the students, and promoted that spiritual culture and those sound, practical views, on which true ministerial success so much depends.

If one of our former pupils, now in Turkey or China, should be tempted by word or deed to wound the feelings of his brother missionaries, there is reason to believe that he might recall the pacific spirit and counsels of his foster father in aid of higher motives to repress the unhallowed impulse. If another, who is settled in New England, should be haunted with the idea that Paul's directions to Timothy come short of what is required by the times that are passing over us, and that he is called upon to enter the arena of political strife, or make himself conspicuous in some other secular sphere, the vision of a more excellent way pursued by his old friend in North Coventry, may rise in time to disenchant his mind.

But I must not trespass further on your time.

May "He who walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and who holdeth the stars in his right hand," crown your anniversary with his favor, and add many fruitful years to the ministry of your honored pastor.

Yours sincerely,

WILLIAM THOMPSON.

2. *The memory of our Pastor's former beloved Companion.* Active, prudent, and affectionate, she opened her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue was the law of kindness. She did him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. Her children arise up and call her blessed—her husband also, and he praiseth her.

Rev. Lavius Hyde of Bolton responded.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen :

We have heard the pastor of this church, and the minister of this people, saying in his pulpit, in the presence of the great congregation, that he had committed some mistakes. He owned that his ministry had not been free from imperfections. There is a margin, however, sufficiently broad for every hearer to conclude that in recalling one great event of his life, the introduction, almost forty years since, of a companion to be his yoke-fellow in the ministry, he does not confess any mistake.

Neither would an examination of the terms employed by the Committee of this Church and Society in sentiment number two, to express the feelings with which they remember the way the Lord their God has led them these forty years, lead us to conclude that the people suppose their pastor made one of his mistakes in bringing such a wife to North Coventry.

I am happy in testifying here, that, after some years of acquaintance with the parties, I have not the first evidence that my beloved friend made any mistake in identifying his interests with the person specified in the sentiment prepared by your Committee.

In the latter part of the year 1817, I was introduced, as a candidate for the ministry, to a rural district in the western part of this State. Among many interesting families composing that community, it seems suitable, on this occasion, to specify two, in whom I became deeply interested. At the head of one was a widowed mother. Though change and sorrow had come over her, and the burden of advancing infirmities, a mother's heart was beating warmly as ever with joy in her children, and with an unwavering confidence in God, that they would be useful in life, and share in His grace forever. She had a son George. Of him she loved to talk. Extracts from his letters, which had comforted her heart were read, and this only prepared the way to ask prayer for that son. That he might know the God of his fathers, be sound in the faith, and live and die in Christ's service, was the great consummation of a mother's love. That George was then just girding himself for the ministry, and on retiring from that house I was accustomed to think, the son of such a mother, baptized in tears, and so presented daily before the Angel of the Covenant, will be heard from.

A few miles distant from this blessed mother, dwelt another family, on the eastern slope of the Tagheannic range, amid scenery blending in rare beauty the lovely and the sublime. The father, prompt to meet every duty, mingling affection and authority in harmonious symmetry, with the industry to command leisure. Then that mother, one of those genial spirits that make home delightful, first of all to the husband and father, and an attractive place to every child and every guest. Nine olive plants were flourishing by their table. All seemed to know their places instinctively. It was the law of the house. Seven of them were daughters. Effective industry, on Christian principles, was daily pursued. Life had charms in such a family. No one ever permitted to share in the intellectual and refined hospitalities of that household, could be surprised that three clergymen should each

have sought and found for himself a help-meet there. Betsey was the second of the nine. She happily blended the characteristics of both parents—the judicious, careful, persevering industry of the father, with the well-balanced social sympathies of the mother. ‘Active, prudent, affectionate,’ both parents sat as models when such a daughter grew up in their likeness.

In several of my earliest visits to that family, Betsey was absent in the city of New York. On her return it was remarked by many, ‘She has come bringing a blessing with her.’ It was the blessing of a revival in her own heart. Some new and united labors had been undertaken in that city, by the pastors and others, particularly by Rev. Ward Safford, to give greater power to the gospel by evangelical labors in behalf of the neglected, and she had been associated with those who applied their hearts and hands to this blessed work.

In the following spring, when I became pastor of a flock in the place, not a more active parishioner could have been found. ‘Active, prudent, and affectionate, she opened her mouth with wisdom, and in her tongue was the law of kindness.’ In a Bible-class, where her marked characteristics were developed, she was peculiarly at home, and eminently useful. A new impulse, a rising slide, were perceptible, a brighter day dawned on her coming into the circle. A few months passed, and Betsey lingered, at the close of one of the services, with an unusually thoughtful expression on her countenance. She asked for a few words of counsel. The subject was opened by a momentous inquiry—How much do you know of George Calhoun? I have known him, I replied, for a few years past, sufficiently to respect and love him. A few questions were asked respecting his relations to his fellow students and his teachers, and his social position, and the interview closed with a request that the topic might be resumed on some other occasion.

Not many days after, the inquiry was resumed; and, Is he a working man? Does he love the work of the ministry? On this pivot the great affair seemed to be turning.

Ere long, some of those busy bodies who are ever ready to assume responsibility in such cases, began to whisper—‘He is a clever man, but not quite good enough for her, and I have told her so.’ Then followed predictions that instead of the hand he would have the mitten. A few months elapsed, and the hand was given, and good mittens besides, for more than thirty years. They stood before me, joined hands, and the twain became one.

She did him good, and not evil, all the days of her life.

He is much indebted, under God, for what he is, and what he has done, to that active, prudent, and affectionate companion.

She was eminently fitted for a minister's wife, by her social habits. The aged, the afflicted, the youth, and the little children, all had a timely share in her sympathies. Perhaps none of us can name another, in the circle of our acquaintance, so prompt in the discharge of social duties. At all the public gatherings in the county, to further Zion's interests, she was more in the habit of being present than almost any other clergyman's wife. In all the pastor's duties, in councils, in ordinations, and in benevolent organizations, she was by the side of that working man, and always a help-meet for him. The woman is the glory of the man. Her husband praiseth her, and hath reason to bless the Lord in so doing.

She was active, prudent, and affectionate as a mother. Her children arise up and call her blessed. Should they do this, their venerable father, all the friends of their mother, and all the congregation, would say Amen.

So let it be.

Music—"She has gone to her grave in peace."

3. *This Church and Society*.—Always true to their engagements, faithful in friendship, warm in sympathy and constant in their devotion. May the Great Shepherd ever lead them in green pastures and beside the still waters.

Responded to by Rev. Abram Marsh, of Tolland.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS:

I recognize the honor in being invited to respond to the Sentiment now before us.

One reason for my being the better able to reply to this Sentiment may be the fact that, from my long residence near this people, I am intimately acquainted with the character of those to whom the Sentiment relates, and therefore can speak what I am happy to believe to be true, with honest intention, and with a free and warm heart.

The Sentiment is an expression of character in regard to this church and society. It has a fit place in view of the fact that as a church and society you have, during forty years, this day, had but one pastor; and all this while he has received the substantial tokens of your respect, confidence and love.

We interpret this Sentiment as referring especially to what is true of this church and society, in their relation to their pastor; yet what is

true of a people in this relationship, is characteristic of them in a greater or less measure in their relations to each other.

But the Sentiment!—"The church and society, always true to their engagements, faithful in friendship, warm in sympathy and constant in their devotion. May the great Shepherd lead them into green pastures and beside the still waters."

It will be perceived at a glance, that the Sentiment contains a group of excellencies than can grow and flourish only under Christian influences. Of whatever church and society they are substantially true, they are an honor. For found where they may be, they are of intrinsic value, and constitute the elements of character that command our respect. Each specification in this Sentiment is an element of character that reminds us of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report. If there be any virtue and any praise, we say that they are in these things.

But the Sentiment, as intended to be understood, is, that these particulars are elements of character this church and society have exhibited in their relations to their honored pastor.

There is no small evidence of this in the fact that to-day is celebrated the fortieth anniversary of his ministry with them.

They have certainly shown the first particular of this Sentiment to be true, or this anniversary had found no place in their history.

This day will be a memorial to all who love to trace their genealogy back to this people, and to honor their ancestors and to receive honor from them, that in their relations to him whose ministry of forty years has signally left its impress here, this church and society have been "always true to their engagements." They said on the day whose anniversary we commemorate, we will be true to our engagements with you whom we welcome in the place and character of our pastor. And have they not well redeemed their pledge,—the Fathers first, and then the next generation,—and now their children, who this day are foremost in honoring their revered pastor.

We say that so it should be. But where it is, a church and society, because it ought to be, none the less honor their own character by the sacredness with which they cherish the obligations they put themselves under to their pastor.

Does it not speak well for a people's regard for the pastoral office, and well for the respect and love they cherish for him who fills it among them, that forty years bear witness that they have been "true to their engagements to him."

But the Sentiment speaks of the faithful friendship of the church

and society for their pastor, and their warm sympathy in his behalf. For thus we interpret it. The chief elements of friendship are natural and Christian love. Often they are strongly blended together, flowing in the same current and toward the same object. Such friendship exists in a greater or less degree in the social relations between a pastor and his people. In individual instances, natural love is often the basis of warm affection for a pastor combined with respect for his character, and with gratitude for kind and unwearied interest manifested.

The power of natural friendship was seen in one of its purest and sublimest exhibitions, when the individual who had the charge of the little son of the Admiral of the Royal George, relinquished the opportunity of saving himself, for the sake of preserving the boy under the sudden disaster by which the vessel in a few minutes sunk with a thousand souls on board.

The highest power of Christian friendship was seen in our Redeemer. Transcendent above all that we can think! Disinterested and self-sacrificing in divine perfection! And under it, when on earth, loving his *own*, he loved them to the end.

And we are right in saying that this people, loving their *own* pastor these forty years, will love him unto the end.

Nowhere is there to be found so fine a relationship and opportunity for a wide-encircling, social and individual friendship, on the basis of natural and christian love, as between a pastor and his people.

The whole relationship, the nature of it, the object of it, the disinterested and benevolent character of the pastor's motives, purposes and labors, all conspire to favor a happy development of natural and Christian love in a manner to make both pastor and people faithful in their friendship. It is a great honor to them, that for so long a period they have in so eminent and happy degree, exhibited sincere friendship and unflinching and warm sympathy for him and his family in all their joys and sorrows.

Such friendship and sympathy are among the hundred fold he receives in this life for his labor of love, his patience of hope and work of faith among them.

The reasons for this friendship toward such a pastor are an hundred fold; and nobly have they repaid, what they have received, into his bosom.

A mother of a fine family, endeavoring to secure respectability of character and success in life for her children under allotments of providence, unattended by advantages given many, said to her pastor, "you

have always tried to do my family good." And the children of that family, under the genial and encouraging influences of that pastor's interest in them, and other healthful causes, were passing into youth and early manhood with true respectability of character. Has not many a father and mother among this people abundant reason to offer a like grateful acknowledgment to their beloved pastor?

Here there is a strong reason why you have been faithful in your friendship for your pastor. And how many that have secured in his heart and his labors such an interest, whether they live and die in the inherited home, or seek the marts of commerce, or go to distant places of new enterprise, will love to remember, with undying affection, their pastor. And to say nothing of the gifts, some may offer from the abundance which their character he helped to form, was essential to their acquiring,—what a revenue of friendship from warm and sympathetic hearts is garnered up in the treasury of such a pastor,—more priceless than rubies, and above the gold of Ophir. Such a treasury has the pastor of this church and society, and well have they poured the treasures of their hearts into it.

But there is an element of this friendship, when it is Christian, that never dies. It survives the changes that dissolve all earthly relations. It will be in that better and purer world—

“Where perfect love and friendship reign,
Through all eternity.”

But there is another element in this sentiment;—constancy in their devotion! We said as we read this, how true of this people! And this we know from our acquaintance, and from their history we have heard this day from their pastor's lips. And we said also as we read—“Happy is that people that is in such a care. Yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord.” Such a character in regard to the worship of God is not the work of a pastor alone. The pastor and people are co-workers together with God in the great work of moulding their religious character. But will this people be in generations to come, “constant in their devotion?” Such is impliedly wished in the close of this sentiment. “May the Great Shepherd lead them into green pastures and beside the still waters.” We add,—in all generations of time,—yea, more, we offer the wish that the Great Shepherd may, in his own good time, gather the pastor and all his flock into the better land, where,

“ O'er all those wide, extended plains,
 Shines one eternal day ;
 Where God the Son forever reigns,
 And scatters night away ;
 No chilling winds nor pois'nous breath
 Can reach that healthful shore ;
 Sickness and sorrow, pain and death,
 Are felt and feared no more.”

4. *The Dead of the Church in forty years.*—Dismissed by death from the church militant, they have joined the church triumphant, leaving us their example to imitate and their memory to cherish.

Responded to by Rev. A. S. Atwood, of Mansfield.

MR. CHAIRMAN,—Not here—gone up—“*behold they live forever more!*”

“ These all died in faith, having received the promise, looking for a city whose foundation, whose builder and Maker is God.”

It would ill become us to forget on this occasion that the church is an institution of God, and not of man ; organized for the depository of the scriptures, and the grand and honored instrumentality for the conversion and salvation of the world. Nothing can take its place. Nothing do its work.

Here, the church militant is a movable kingdom—a tent—like the tabernacle in the wilderness, guided by the *cloud* of the Divine presence—a dwelling suited to sojourners and pilgrims—a residence during *minority* and a *spiritual education*. But when of *full age*, the ends of probation answered, we go to reside in our Father's house, the saint's eternal home, where the united family of God meet, “and shall ever be with the Lord.”

Their conflicts all over, their victories won, they are joined “to the general assembly and the church of the first born, whose names are written in Heaven.”

“ Once they were mourning here below,
 And wet their couch with tears ;
 They wrestled hard, as we do now,
 With sins, and doubts, and fears.
 I ask them whence their victory came ;
 They, with united breath,
 Ascribe their conquest to the Lamb,
 Their triumph to His death.”

Remember them ! yes ; we loved them on earth, they are still dearer to us now they are in Heaven. Their very names, their pray-

ers, their faith, their labors of love, are yet fragrant, and their memories embalmed in our hearts; and following in their footsteps, wherein they followed Christ, we will hope to come where they have gone, and with them lay down our crowns at the feet of Him who loved us and gave himself for us, "ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever."

Music—"Night of the Grave."

5. *The Emigrants from the Church!*—Like streams from a fountain, they have diminished the native spring, but widened its influence and extended its blessings."

Responded to by Rev. Mark Tucker, D. D., of Vernon.

At this late hour I am admonished to be brief in responding to this sentiment so beautifully expressed.

Emigrants! Daniel Webster is reported to have said of New Hampshire, "that it was a good State to go from." By which he meant, probably, it was a good state to raise men. As the place of his birth was remote from the great marts of business, active minds would seek a residence in large towns. Retired rural places like this could not expect to detain young men of enterprise; they would go forth to wider fields. Noah Webster, the great lexicographer, said at the close of the last century, referring to places in the vicinity of Hartford, "large towns are never made by farmers, but commerce and manufactures collect people together." This has been a rich soil in which to raise men. Some trees of vigorous growth and great fruitfulness have been taken from this nursery.

Or to adopt the figure of the committee on sentiments, some noble streams have issued from this fountain. This is a scriptural figure; we read of the fountain of Jacob, Deut. 33: 28. This church, we may say without extravagance, has been a fountain of *truth*, of *benevolence*, of *morality*, of *religion*. Unlike some churches, which may be called pools of turbid water, where error has been preached and sustained, it has been a fountain of living water.

Dr. Calhoun has been casting salt into this fountain for forty years, by preaching the doctrines of Christ. Thus it has been kept pure, so that the streams which have flowed from it have enriched the fields of Zion. This was a living fountain before he came here. The former pastors of this flock, the fathers of this church, were excellent men. Some noble streams issued from this fountain. The two Drs. Strong, one settled in Norwich, the other in Hartford, were eminent in their day. The Rev. Harvey Talcott, of Portland, Conn., Dr. Badger, the

excellent Secretary of the American Home Missionary Society, whose influence like a rich stream has blessed the churches at the West, and Harlan Page, who by his holy example and personal efforts was the instrument of so many conversions; these and many others, who were very useful, went from this church. Some of these streams became fountains, from which other streams have flowed. How many souls have been converted, how many churches have been strengthened, how many Sabbath schools have been blessed by those who have gone out from this place.

While "the native spring" has been diminished, the streams have flowed on. But those who remain have more value, like the Sybilline oracles, whose leaves, it is said, as the number decreased, had a higher price fixed upon them.

We have come here to-day to honor the mother of so many spiritual children, to rejoice with her in view of the good that has been done, to join with her in ascribing glory to God, for so much grace bestowed upon men. May this spring remain pure and abundant while the earth shall need streams to refresh the cities of our God!

6. *The survivors of the church of 1819.*—

Long have they borne the ark of God,
And faithful bear it still;
And long may it be ere Death shall call
Their honored place to fill.

Responded to by Dr. Calhoun.

It is allotted me to speak of the surviving members of the church of March 10, 1819. Exhaustion demands that my words be few. While I entertain great respect and esteem for the younger portion of the church, I have a peculiar interest in those who commenced the journey with me, and have survived the changes of the forty years during which we have sojourned together. The days of light and darkness through which we have passed, and the many solemn and affecting scenes in which we have mingled, have tried and cemented the bond of union subsisting between us. And now that we are brought so near the close of our connection with the church on the earth, and so soon are, as we hope, to be reunited with the one hundred and fifty of our number who have left us for the better world, and to be associated with the general assembly of the church of the first born; while lingering here we will endeavor to aid by our prayers and exertions, in perpetuating and enlarging the church to which we belong. And may it be, that when we are "gathered to our own people," our

Master will recognize us among his servants who were faithful unto death.

7. *The memory of Harlan Page.*

Responded to by Mr. Nathaniel Root, Jr., of Coventry.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

The life, the character, and the labors of Harlan Page are too well known by this audience and this community, for me to occupy time in referring to them.

Yet, connected as he was with this Church and Society on *that day*—the fortieth anniversary of which we to-day celebrate—his memory demands of us a passing tribute.

In regard to his *life as a Christian*, it appears that he made a public profession of religion, and united with this Church forty-five years ago last Sabbath, and that he remained connected with this Church about eleven years; that during this time, he was *ardent, active, and untiring*; and that his *efforts were principally directed to one object*—"the conversion of souls." "The survivors of 1819" will bear testimony.

In the summer of 1825, he was appointed Agent of the General Depository of the American Tract Society at New York, and entered upon the duties of that office in the fall of the same year. This place he occupied till his death, which was in the fall of 1834.

It may be interesting to some, to know what led to his connection with this Society. He was what is termed "a very ingenious person." In early life, he practiced drawing and engraving on wood and copper, for which he had a natural predilection; and in the spring of 1824, was induced to turn his attention chiefly to that business.

The Rev. Dr. Edwards, one of the Directors of the Am. Tract Society, in the year 1842, speaking of its early history, says, "In reference to Harlan Page, he well recollected when the Secretary came to him in 1823 or 4, and said, 'we wanted engravings on the tracts, and there was an ingenious mechanic in Connecticut, a pious, devoted man, who could make them.' In this way Providence had brought into connection with this Society that man of God, whose example had done so much to awaken the churches to fidelity to the souls of men."

In regard to his *character as a Christian*, he was of that class who obeyed the divine command, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

In reference to his *labors*, it is recorded of him, that while lying on his death-bed, and looking back on his work on earth as ended, he

said to his companion, with the solemnity of eternity on his countenance, "I know it is all of God's grace, and nothing that I have done; but I think I have had evidence that more than one hundred souls have been converted to God through my own direct and personal instrumentality."

And in addition, what words more expressive (in reference to his labors) can be used, than those engraved on yonder marble slab, where his dust reposes, which are, "He ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears."

May the memory of Harlan Page ever be cherished in grateful remembrance by us.

8. *Our Pastor's present efficient helper.* Kind, careful, and judicious, she looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

Responded to by Rev. Prof. E. A. Lawrence, D. D., of East Windsor Seminary.

MR. CHAIRMAN:

You have assigned me a *good* subject on this occasion, as I have the best reason for knowing: for it was chosen by our venerable friend, in whose judgment we all have so much confidence. But you require me to speak upon it under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. I am to do it in her presence, and also in the presence of her husband, If I should say anything good of her, modesty would lead her to doubt its truth; and if I should say anything evil, he would certainly contradict me. Then, too, the difficulty is increased by the delicacy of her relation to one to whose many virtues a worthy tribute has just been paid. But, as in the Christian ministry, there is an apostolic succession, consisting in the spirit of the gospel work, so I believe there may be a similar succession in the wives of a good minister, when they are providentially called to it.

The sentiment presents your pastor's wife in the light of a *helper* and thus indicates her *relation* to him. I like this view, and the good old Saxon word employed to express it. It is the one used by the translators of the Bible, to set forth the divine idea of the relation of a true wife to her husband. She is a help, a *help-meet*, his social and moral equivalent and complement, in that conjugal arithmetic, by the rules of which, one added to another makes not two, but *one*.

You call her an *efficient* helper, and I have no doubt she is such, although the Apostle speaks of woman as "the weaker vessel." She

is weaker, as the delicate China vase is weaker than the iron pot, or the ponderous stone jar; as the graceful, waving vine is weaker than the gnarled oak which it entwines and adorns. And yet she is efficient, as the warm and noiseless sunlight, that thaws out the oak after the frosts of winter, and as the soft and silent air, which embosoms it, and imparts nutriment and vitality.

You next describe her *qualities*—not muscular, bold, and judgeliike. These are attributes of the masculine gender, to which a few *man-ish* women in our times are aspiring, and which about an equal number of *womanish* men admire in them. No woman, clever though she may be, can make, by such a transformation, more than a third or fourth rate *man*. Your pastor's wife, Mr. Chairman, I know to be of a totally different disposition. She is *kind*, which means, according to Webster, "disposed to do good to others, and to make them happy,"—the very quality most important in one holding such a relation. Then she is careful—no more and no less, but just *care-full*—which exactly balances the mind, and gives it weight, stability, and healthful action. These cares, however, which so fill and occupy her, are not all the cares of this world. Oh, no! but the greater part take hold of the future life, and chime with the great work which your pastor, these forty years, has been performing among you. And in the arrangement and disposal of these cares, she is *judicious*, that is, governed by a sound judgment. This connects itself with what follows.

"She looketh well to the ways of her household." This introduces her to her true *sphere*—the domestic circle—*home*. Here she is the center of attraction, the presiding divinity. This is her realm. She looketh well to the ways of her husband—to his lying down and his rising up, to his going out and his coming in, as also, with true interest, to his children and children's children. For when she gave herself to him, she said, in the sincerity of her affectionate nature, "All thine are mine." She looketh well to her parlor and her pantry; to the pies, puddings, and pancakes. She looketh well to the kitchen and the kettles, to the kindlings, and even the kittens.

Now, sir, what is the effect of this watchfulness and industry in such a helper? "The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil." Solomon says that "through idleness the house droppeth through," but that "the hand of the diligent maketh rich." Therefore it is that "her husband hath no need of spoil," for "the thoughts of the diligent tend only to plenty." There is plenty in her larder for all the purposes of a generous hospitality to his guests, and *more* of rich sympathy in her heart with him in his

joys and sorrows, his labors and his trials, his preaching and his people.

Now, Sir, you will see the verity of the inspired declaration, that "it is not good for man to be alone," and that other divine word, "he that findeth a wife, findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord," although I am sorry to say that some of my clerical brethren are a little heretical on this point.

Shall I trespass too much on your time, if in closing, I say a word on the *acquisition* of such a helper? In the old Bay State, is a certain city called Salem, which by interpretation is *peace*, famous in times of yore for its witches and its witchcrafts. And it is said that the women of that city still possess some crafts or powers of casting a spell over the wisest and the best of men. There dwelt in that city a woman whose name was Mary, the knowledge of whose virtues drew your beloved pastor to the siege. And when he returned, it was with the words of the old Roman conqueror on his lips, "*Veni, vidi, vici!*" I came, I saw, I conquered. And of Mary, it may be said, with a significance surpassed only by the original application of the words, "She hath chosen the good part." If it please our great Father, may it be long, *very* long, "before he shall be taken away from her," and from us.

9. *New England!*—May the pure and holy principles of her Puritan forefathers be cherished by their descendants to the latest generation.

Responded to by David S. Calhoun, Esq., of Manchester.

This sentiment, Mr. Chairman, is very common in these days. We hear it, or one similar in idea, at almost every celebration. And often it is strangely in contrast with persons and place, and sounds as incongruous as it would to hear a company of modern Italian music-grinders toasting the valor and integrity of the old Romans. But here, in North Coventry, where is as yet no course either for the iron-horse or the tame lightning—where Saturday night is still holy time, and the Assembly's Catechism continues authoritative—where the office of tything-man is no sinecure, and scarce a dozen years have passed since the gospel, reflected from a high sounding board, fell on the ears of sinners in square pews, and where still remains much of the old Puritan spirit, well represented both in pastor and people, this sentiment is peculiarly appropriate, and I am pleased to respond to it under such circumstances.

The principles of our Puritan forefathers! How much do we hear,

but how little do we see of them! How often are they praised, but how seldom practiced! They are bottled up by most, like mustard, and used for a flavor or relish, and not for food; being, it would seem, too pungent for our modern, weak stomachs. The two and one half centuries which have rolled by since John Carver, Edward Winslow, Elder Brewster, William Bradford, and their fellow pilgrims, first made their homes in these western forests, have nearly erased from the minds of us, their descendants, all correct estimate of them, our ancestors. We have deified them and placed them among the stars, and are content to wonder at their brightness without studying their character. The first settlers of New England were not quiet-seekers;—they were not fugitives from tyranny;—they came to this their new world,

“Not as the flying come,
In silence and in fear,—”

but as the guardians of *truth*; and their great, absorbing purpose was to make it free and *sovereign*. It was this high motive that kept the prow of the Mayflower steady to the west through the sixty-six days of a stormy and dangerous voyage. It was this which upheld their spirits as they dug in the frozen ground the graves of half of their number in less than four months from their landing. Pursuing this purpose, they laid the foundations of those free institutions which are now our greatest pride, our best blessings. They first made conscience free, and then civil liberty followed of course; for religious freedom is the source of all true liberty. This devotion to the cause of truth—this linking of himself to that irresistible power, and the consequent development of mind and body under its control made the old Puritan the man he was, inimitable and irresistible;—lofty without pride—economical without meanness—courageous without recklessness—unchangeable in purpose without obstinacy—of the profoundest feeling, but of the greatest self-command—not always sympathetic, but ever just—a man of power, able to subdue all things, even himself. This constituted that intensely vital and effective element of character which has ever distinguished New England from all other portions of the world, or even of our own country, and which has been so effective in preserving the great West from imported and inbred corruption, to be the home of civil and religious liberty.

And now, in view of these facts, what is our duty, if we would realize the wish embraced in our sentiment, and perpetuate the principles and institutions of our pilgrim forefathers? We must not only

praise their virtues, but we must imitate their example. And in these days when there is so much that is glittering but empty—when the solid and simple are too often despised, and when men prefer the material to the moral, and have installed the intellect leader before the conscience, and when we are becoming vain and reckless, and blindly follow every sweet-sounding delusion, we must set up anew the standard of *truth*, and gather around it, and defend it from every assault of error, secret or open. We must show ourselves Puritans in character, as well as by descent. We must make the principles of our forefathers our principles—their lives our lives—their faith our faith, and their God our God. Thus, and thus only can we preserve, firm and unshaken, those defenses of civil and religious freedom which they reared, and honor their memory while we bless ourselves and our posterity.

Music—"Hurráh for New England."

A large and beautifully decorated pyramid loaf of cake was then presented to the pastor and his wife by Dea. E. Kingsbury and wife, accompanied with these remarks from Dea. K. :

MR. CHAIRMAN,—I understand that this loaf of cake was presented for this occasion, with the wish expressed by the donor, that if it was not wanted to satisfy our appetites, it might be presented to our pastor and his companion ; and since the entertainment we have been requested to perform the pleasing duty of making the presentation. It occurs to me that this loaf is a faint emblem of that gospel which our pastor has so long proclaimed. It is bread. The gospel is "the bread of life," which, if a man eat, he shall live forever. It also represents the duration of our pastor's ministry with us. These four tiers, each ten years,—four times ten,—forty years. From the top downwards, it fitly represents our pastor's influence and usefulness, extending itself on every side, with the passing years. I trust it also in the same way represents our affection for him. And now, beloved pastor, with your companion, in the name of the members of this society, male and female, we present you this loaf of cake, hoping that God in his providence may spare your lives and your usefulness, more than another ten years, that may form another base, broader, and wider, and deeper still.

Upon the reception of the cake, Dr. Calhoun for himself and wife replied as follows :

MY FRIENDS,—You have presented us with the last of thousands of favors, which we have received from the people with whom we are

connected. And this is more highly appreciated as coming, not from the elder part of the congregation, who have so long continued their expressions of respect and esteem, but from the younger portion. We receive it with grateful emotions. We thank the person whose generosity and delicate taste provided you with it, and we thank you for the manner of its presentation. And here we would express our grateful acknowledgments to the committee of ladies and gentlemen for their untiring efforts to make this fortieth anniversary honorable and grateful to their aged pastor. May the history of the church in connection with your future life, be brighter than that of the past; and the blessings of God bestowed on you be more abundant than those experienced by those who have gone before you.

In behalf of this church and society I avail myself of this opportunity of expressing our high gratification at, and grateful acknowledgment for the presence of those who are not of us, and for the aid which has been granted us in erecting our Ebenezer. May a kind providence attend them to their respective homes, and the communities with which they are connected, be signally blessed in all their future history.

Prayer was then offered by Rev. T. K. Fessenden, of Ellington. The Doxology was sung to the tune of Old Hundred, and a Benediction by the pastor closed the services of the occasion.

